

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BONN 15835 072050Z

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5511

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

QFHJA/USMISSION BERLIN 5238

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 15835

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, GW, GE, WB

SUBJECT: INNER-GERMAN RELATIONS -- FRG REVEALS

SCHMIDT-HONECKER EXCHANGE

REFS: (A) BONN 15121

(B) BONN 14874

(C) BONN 14772

1. FRG GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN KLAUS BOELLING REVEALED ON A LATE FRIDAY (OCT 4) TELEVISION PROGRAM THAT CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT AND SED FIRST SECRETARY HONECKER HAVE HAD AN EXCHANGE OF LETTERS IN AN EFFORT TO SOUND OUT WHAT PROGRESS MIGHT BE POSSIBLE IN ANY NEW SERIES OF INNER-GERMAN NEGOTIATIONS. IN LATER EXPLANATORY STATEMENTS MADE OVER THE FOLLOWING TWO DAYS, BOELLING INDICATED THAT THE EXCHANGE HAD BEGUN IN AUGUST, THAT THE INITIATIVE FOR DETERMINING THE POSSIBILITIES OF IMPROVING RELATIONS HAD COME FROM EAST BERLIN, AND THAT SCHMIDT HAD WRITTEN FIRST. BOELLING SAID THAT THE EXCHANGE OF LETTERS WAS NOTHING "SENSATIONAL" BECAUSE IT WAS IN LINE WITH SCHMIDT'S PUBLIC DECLARATION ABOUT WORKING FOR BETTER INNER-GERMAN RELATIONS, AND IT WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 BONN 15835 072050Z

NOT "SECRET" SINCE THE COALITION PARLIAMENTARY PARTY

CHIEFS HAD BEEN INFORMED AS HAD THE PERTINENT CABINET OFFICERS. RESPONDING TO QUESTIONING, BOELLING SAID THAT NO SCHMIDT-HONECKER OR SCHMIDT-SINDERMAN MEETING WAS IN SIGHT, INDICATING SUCH A MEETING WOULD BE POSSIBLE ONLY AFTER PROPER GROUNDWORK HAD BEEN DONE SO IT COULD HAVE POSITIVE RESULTS. HE SAID THAT THE HURDLES ON THE DECISIVE POINT -- THE GDR DOUBLING OF THE COMPULSORY CURRENCY EXCHANGE -- REMAIN AS HIGH AS BEFORE.

2. COMMENT: SENIOR CHANCELLERY AIDE TOLD AMBASSADOR ON OCT 7 THAT GOVERNMENT REVELATION OF THESE EVENTS WAS RESULT OF LEAK. THE GDR INITIATIVE CAME IN JUNE AND SCHMIDT'S LETTER WAS SENT IN AUGUST, THE LATTER BEING THEN KEPT QUIET BECAUSE OF PROBLEMS WITH GDR OVER FEA. FRG MADE ANNOUNCEMENT NOW, SAID SANNE, BECAUSE BERNDT CONRAD OF DIE WELT HAD BECOME AWARE OF EXCHANGE AND HAD TOLD BOELLING DIE WELT WOULD PUBLISH ITS INFORMATION ON SATURDAY, OCT 5. IT WAS SCHMIDT'S DECISION TO DEPRIVE DIE WELT OF A SCOOP AND HAVE BOELLING REVEAL EXCHANGE ON FRIDAY NIGHT TELEVISION SHOW.
HILLENBRAND

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